

Consumer Alert!

from the Tennessee Division of Consumer Affairs
615.741.4737 or toll-free 800.342.8385
www.state.tn.us/consumer

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TELEMARKETING SCHEME EXPLOITS NASHVILLE RADIO STATION

The Tennessee Division of Consumer Affairs has learned from a Nashville radio station of a telemarketing scam being conducted in the middle Tennessee area. According to consumers that have called the station, they received calls from a telemarketer saying they were with a radio station and that valuable prizes could be won by answering a simple trivia question. After correctly answering the question the prizes are quickly listed and then the consumer is asked to pay a \$49.95 processing fee to receive their winnings. This fee may be paid by credit card or by check. The twist to this scheme is that, according to the consumers, the telemarketer offers to bring the prizes to the home and pick up the fee all within an hour.

“The practice of telemarketers offering prizes for a fee is not uncommon, but the offer to personally deliver the prizes to the home in such a short time is cause for concern,” said Mark Williams, director of the Tennessee Division of Consumer Affairs. “There is some concern because of the insistence by the telemarketer to come to the home, that there may be more at stake here than a consumer losing \$49.95,” said Williams.

Under the Tennessee Consumer Protection Act the practice of requiring a consumer to pay any amount of money in order to receive a prize, gift or award is illegal. “Consumers should not allow anyone to come to their home under these circumstances, radio stations do not deliver prize winnings to a consumer’s home,” Williams continued.

Williams offers these tips to consumers concerning unsolicited telemarketing calls:

- “ Call the radio station to confirm contest
 - “ Get the name, address and phone number of the telemarketer
 - “ Check with Division of Consumer Affairs for complaint history of the company>
 - “ Do not be intimidated, if you feel the least bit uneasy about the call, hang up!
 - “ Insist on getting all information in writing
 - “ As a rule of thumb, never give out your credit card or bank account information to an unsolicited caller

 - “ Be very suspicious of any caller that offers prizes or gifts
- Avoid doing business with any telemarketer who:
- “ Uses high pressure tactics
 - “ Needs a response immediately
 - “ Offers prizes or gifts to encourage you to buy something or pay a “processing fee”
 - “ Makes an offer that sounds too good to be true
 - “ Offers to send someone to pick up your money

For a brochure on telemarketing fraud or to file a complaint, contact the Tennessee Division of

Consumer Affairs at 500 James Robertson Pkwy, Nashville, TN, 37243-0600 or e-mail to Consumer.Affairs@state.tn.us. Tennesseans can call the Division at 800.342.8385.